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THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY
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THE SITUATION IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-seventh year

Letter dated 19 November 1992 from the Permanent Representative of Mauritania to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the final declaration of the fifth regular session of the Presidential Council of the Arab Maghreb Union, held from 15 to 16 Jumada I A.H. 1413 (10-11 November A.D. 1992).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and the aforementioned Declaration circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 25, 28, 30, 33, 35, 43, 45, 46 and 143, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mohamedou OULD MOHAMED MAHMOUD
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

ANNEX

In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate

Final declaration of the fifth regular session of the Presidential Council, held at Nouakchott from 15 to 16 Jumada I A.H. 1413 (1402 MWR) (10-11 November A.D. 1992)

At the invitation of His Excellency President Maawiya Ould Sid' Ahmed Taya, President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, and pursuant to articles 4 and 5 of the Treaty instituting the Arab Maghreb Union, the fifth regular session of the Presidential Council of the Arab Maghreb Union was held at Nouakchott from 15 to 16 Jumada I A.H. 1413 (1402 MWR) (10-11 November A.D. 1992) and was attended by the following:

His Excellency President Maawiya Ould Sid' Ahmed Taya, President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania;

His Excellency President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, President of the Republic of Tunisia;

His Excellency President Ali Kafi, President of the Supreme Council of State of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria;

His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Karim Lamrani, Prime Minister, representing His Majesty King Hassan II, King of the Kingdom of Morocco;

Mr. Muhammad Abu al-Qasim al-Zawiy, Secretary of the Libyan Arab Brotherhood Bureau at Rabat, representing His Excellency Colonel Muammar Qaddafi, Leader of the Great Revolution of 1 September of the great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

At the opening of the session, His Excellency President Maawiya Ould Sid' Ahmed Taya, President of the Islamic Republic and Chairman of the Presidential Council, took the floor to express a warm welcome to the heads of delegations from the different States of the Union. He said the Mauritanian people was proud to host the session and determined to maintain its active participation in building the Maghreb edifice.

The Chairman also drew attention to the achievements of joint action by the Union and to the significant steps so far taken in the direction of integration and convergence. Some of these had taken the form of agreements, which were of great importance in view of their direct bearing on the daily life of Maghreb citizens. Others were evident in the productive dialogue established with regional groupings in Africa and Europe, which would help to build strong bridges between North and South. Such achievements were being made in changed international conditions: these conditions must be addressed and their negative aspects avoided.

At the conclusion of his address, His Excellency President Maawiya Ould Sid' Ahmed Taya said that the unification and economic and social integration of the Arab Maghreb constituted a serious stage on the road towards the goal of comprehensive Arab unity.

His Excellency President Ali Kafi, President of the Supreme Council of State of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, then spoke on behalf of the heads and members of delegations. He congratulated His Excellency President Maawiya Ould Sid' Ahmed Taya on the trust placed in him by the Mauritanian people when electing him President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania and addressed his sincere best wishes to the fraternal people of Mauritania.

The President then highlighted the strategic position of the Arab Maghreb, which must be exploited for the benefit of peace, progress, prosperity and stability in that vital region. He emphasized the need to build a cohesive and firmly founded Arab Maghreb governed by fraternity, concord and solidarity. He went on to say that not all the gains made by the Union had been translated into reality and called for an objective assessment, to be carried out by Maghreb experts, of how a strong and harmonious Maghreb entity could be formed on the basis of a long-term strategy, drawing on our own enormous resources.

In conclusion, President Ali Kafi again thanked the leadership and people of Mauritania for their hospitality and for the warm reception extended to his and other delegations in the noble land of Mauritania.

The Council then proceeded to examine the items on the session's agenda, for the purpose of reviewing the course and dimensions of Maghreb action since the previous Presidential session. It also exchanged views and comments on issues of joint Maghreb significance.

1. Maghreb action

(a) Progress in building the Union

The Council considered the report submitted to it by the Council of Foreign Ministers concerning the course of Maghreb action during the period and progress made in building the Arab Maghreb Union, despite the actual conditions and external factors affecting this course of action. It expressed the wish that all bodies concerned with joint Maghreb action should continue their efforts to give the necessary impetus and to impart added dynamism to the process, with a view to fulfilling the aspirations of the Union's peoples and to realizing their legitimate hopes of creating a single Maghreb space where citizens would enjoy freedom of movement, ownership and investment.

With regard to progress in implementing the 15 Maghreb decisions and agreements, the Council took note of the status of the agreements, which are currently undergoing constitutional and technical procedures in preparation for their imminent entry into force. The Council also registered its

satisfaction at the entry into force, as of the beginning of the fourth month of this year, of the Agreement on unified bilateral payments between Maghreb central banks.

The Council was also apprised of the results of the joint meetings held between Ministers for Foreign Affairs and other Ministers and Secretaries concerned with Maghreb action. It expressed satisfaction at the progress made at those meetings in overcoming technical difficulties, with a view to advancing the completion of executive programmes and establishing priorities for Union action in the context of a clear plan ensuring progress in solid and carefully considered phases.

In this connection, the Council asked the Ministerial Economic and Financial Committee to take measures and make the necessary technical arrangements for the inauguration of a free trade area, and to make appropriate preparations for the other stages of the Maghreb joint development strategy.

The Council also took note of progress made in establishing organs and institutions of the Union in their permanent headquarters. It expressed satisfaction that the General Secretariat had moved into its headquarters at Rabat and begun to carry out its functions, and stressed the need to strengthen this organ of the Union until all its human and material components were in place.

The Council likewise considered ongoing practical arrangements to install the other organs and institutions of the Union in their headquarters and, in this connection, emphasized the importance of these institutions in view of their major contribution to fulfilling Maghreb aspirations and to constructing a better future based on integration, unification and convergence.

(b) Decisions

The Council adopted the following decisions:

A decision amending articles 4 and 5 of the Treaty instituting the Arab Maghreb Union, concerning the periodicity of meetings of the Presidential Council;

A decision to sign the following Maghreb instruments:

The Maghreb Charter on environmental protection and sustainable development;

The Agreement on unified judicial organization between the States of the Arab Maghreb Union;

The Agreement on cultural cooperation between the States of the Arab Maghreb Union;

A decision specifying the headquarters of the organs and institutions of the Arab Maghreb Union;

A decision to appoint the Secretary-General of the Arab Maghreb Union;

A decision to approve an amendment to the rules of procedure of the Consultative Council;

A decision to authorize the agreements and executive instructions formulated by the Specialized Ministerial Committees and relating, in particular, to the Arab Maghreb Prize for cultural achievement; the organization of public transactions; certificates of origin; and the unified system of qualifications for judicial institutes; as well as instructions defining industrial and sanitary standards for veterinary drugs and the import of livestock.

2. Political consultation

In consonance with the year of dialogue and consultation, the Council conducted an assessment of the regional, Arab, African and international situation with a view to coordinating positions and identifying ways of harnessing Union efforts at all levels, in the service of Arab rights and of the causes of international justice, development and peace. In this context, it also commended the efforts to attain these objectives undertaken during the period of the current Presidency.

With respect to the embargo and sanctions imposed on the great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya as a result of the crisis between it and certain Western countries, the Council, recalling the statements adopted by the Union, by the League of Arab States and by the Islamic Conference Organization, and affirming once again its condemnation of all forms of terrorism, expresses its concern at the harm done by this embargo to the Libyan people and to the other peoples of the Arab Maghreb. It also expresses the Union's solidarity with the Jamahiriya and commends the initiatives taken by the Jamahiriya to comply with Security Council resolutions in accordance with the requirements of international law.

In this context, the Presidential Council affirms the Union's determination to persist in efforts to identify a peaceful, fair and honourable solution of the crisis and calls on the Security Council to reconsider its decisions in respect of the Jamahiriya with a view to lifting the embargo.

In its review of the situation in the region, the Council deplored all forms of terrorism and extremism and affirmed the importance of coordination and cooperation among member States to counter and to curb this dangerous phenomenon, which is alien to the Maghreb community, to its civilization and to its ancient traditions of tolerance and solidarity.

Because this phenomenon represents a threat to the stability and security of our community, and to the democratic path it is following, the Council urges all countries to observe the principle of mutual respect for the sovereignty and security of States and to take action to prevent the use of their territory or institutions by individuals or groups seeking to harm our community, its noble values and its generous faith.

The Council reviewed the various stages of the Middle East peace process. After listening to Mr. Yasser Arafat, President of the State of Palestine, and noting the absence of any noticeable progress in the peace talks, it expressed the hope that efforts would be intensified in the search for a fair and peaceful solution of the question of Palestine that would guarantee the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and to the establishment of its own State, as well as Israel's withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories, including the Holy City of Jerusalem. It also called on the two States sponsoring the talks to strive for tangible progress in accordance with the established conditions and guarantees.

The Council also considered the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, which had deteriorated as a result of the constant repressive measures of the Israeli occupation forces against innocent civilians. It expressed its continuing support for the intifadah of the courageous Palestinian people and appealed to the conscience of the international community to end the suffering of a people fighting for the restoration of its dignity, its usurped rights and its self-determination in a manner commensurate with international legitimacy and the principles of human rights.

With respect to the Arabian Gulf region, the Council expressed concern at the sufferings undergone by the fraternal Iraqi people as a result of the international embargo, which had done great harm to children and the elderly by depriving them of the most basic elements of life and medical care, and called for the embargo to be lifted. It affirmed its support for Iraq's territorial integrity and sovereignty over all its national soil. At the same time, it stated that respect for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the fraternal State of Kuwait was imperative and hoped that all States of the region would duly resume their participation in the process of strengthening Arab solidarity.

The Council condemned the measures taken by Iran, in violation of international agreements, to alter the status of the United Arab Emirates island of Abu Musa. It declared its support for the proven rights of the United Arab Emirates to the islands of Abu Musa, Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb, and called for a solution of the disputes by peaceful means and in accordance with the provisions of international conventions, in order to spare the region from any sources of tension and to channel all efforts into cooperation on a basis of harmony and good-neighbourliness.

The Council expressed its profound concern at the continuing civil war in Somalia and the ever-worsening tragedy resulting from the fighting, the spread of hunger and the daily rise in the number of victims. It called on the

fraternal groups in Somalia to let wisdom prevail and to place the higher national interest above every other consideration, in order to ensure the country's unity and independence. The Council also insisted on the need to step up international humanitarian assistance at this critical stage and to formulate an effective plan to ensure such assistance reached those for whom it was intended.

The Council examined, as a matter of deep concern, the situation in the former Republic of Yugoslavia, and especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina, whose peoples were undergoing constant suffering as a result of the aggression and the siege imposed by Serbian forces, as well as those forces' use of ethnic cleansing, concentration camps and campaigns of genocide.

The Council deplores such barbarous acts, expresses its sympathy with the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina and calls on the United Nations and all forces advocating peace and goodwill to work for the removal of the Serbian embargo and to ensure the delivery of help and humanitarian relief supplies to the besieged populations, as well as respect for the independence and sovereignty of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the solution of outstanding problems by peaceful means.

With regard to the strengthening of relations between the Arab Maghreb Union and similar African regional groups for the purpose both of consolidating joint African action and of affirming - given their close historical ties and shared civilization and destiny - that the peoples of the Union belong to this continent, the Council reiterated its readiness to maintain contacts with the Economic Community of West African States, with a view to identifying modalities for cooperation. At the same time it affirmed the Union's determination, pursuant to these objectives and in conformity with the whole spectrum of African concerns, to strengthen its links with other African groupings.

In the light of its interest in African issues and concerns, the Council considered the current situation in Liberia and in Angola. It expressed serious concern at the bloody developments in those two fraternal States and called on the conflicting parties in both countries to settle their differences by peaceful means and to harness their energies to the cause of development.

The Council condemned the policy of apartheid in South Africa, expressing the hope that negotiations between the parties concerned would continue until the apartheid regime was dismantled and replaced by a democratic system representing the majority.

The Council also expressed its keen interest in Africa's development concerns and the multiple challenges posed to development action in general by the shortage of indigenous resources, successive cycles of drought and aggravation of the debt burden. It urged the international community to intensify its efforts and to marshal assistance in support of indigenous African endeavours, with a view to fulfilling the aspirations of our African peoples to development and increased prosperity.

With respect to the dialogue between the Union and the nations of south-western Europe, particularly in the "five plus five" framework, the Council affirmed the importance of resuming this dialogue in order to promote solidarity, security and stability in the region, in recognition of the countries' interrelated interests and of the historical, cultural and commercial links between their peoples in the context of a shared Mediterranean heritage. In this connection, the Council called for a resumption of the work of joint expert groups in preparation for the "five plus five" summit meeting which it was agreed should be held in Tunisia at the earliest opportunity.

Turning to relations between the Union and the European Community, the Council calls for a resumption of meetings between the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the two groups with a view to discussing the most appropriate ways of establishing an advanced framework for cooperation based on partnership, in such a way as to preserve the interests of nations of the Union and the gains made by our community residing in Europe in the light of Europe's future requirements.

In this context, the Presidential Council stresses the importance of ensuring respect for the rights of the Maghreb community at a time of major changes in Europe, as well as the need to enhance their training and to preserve their unique identity.

His Excellency President Maawiya Ould Sid' Ahmed Taya thanked Their Excellencies the Heads of State of countries members of the Union for their efforts and pertinent proposals, which had been of great effect in ensuring the success of their work. The President affirmed the determination of the Union's leaders to continue their productive labours with a view to attaining the objectives of the Treaty instituting the Union and to strengthening ties with similar groups in Africa and Europe in a framework of mutual respect and shared interests. In conclusion, he expressed the pride felt by the Mauritanian people at the presence of the Maghreb leaders in this part of the great Arab Maghreb.

His Excellency President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, President of the Republic of Tunisia, also delivered an address in which he expressed thanks and appreciation to His Excellency President Maawiya Ould Sid' Ahmed Taya, President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, for his unceasing valuable efforts to strengthen the Arab Maghreb edifice. Referring to action taken by the Union, the President emphasized that progress so far was worthy of pride: if further development was required, it should correspond to the aspirations of the Maghreb peoples and further strengthen the Union's credibility, with respect both to Maghreb citizens and to the international domain. The President affirmed that the objective circumstances of the Maghreb situation must not constitute an obstacle to the progress of Union action but should instead serve as a permanent incentive to eliminate such obstacles.

His Excellency President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali added that the time had come to endow the Union with the means to achieve its objectives, particularly

by strengthening the General Secretariat so that it could perform its role in the optimum manner. He expressed the determination of Tunisia, which would have the honour of assuming the Union's Presidency at the beginning of the coming year, to maintain the same endeavour, participation and initiative by all means likely to give the required impetus to Union action - a process of historical necessity and inevitability.

At the conclusion of the session's work, the Presidential Council expressed sincere sentiments of gratitude and appreciation to His Excellency President Maawiya Ould Sid' Ahmed Taya, President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania and current Chairman of the Presidential Council, and to the Government and people of Mauritania for their warm welcome, hospitality and excellent organization, which had been crucial to the success of the session.